In the Claims:

1. (Amended) A method of treating disturbances in iron distribution in a patient suffering from non insulin dependent diabetes mellitus comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of human erythropoietin.

2. (Cancelled) ~~The method of claim 1 wherein the patient is suffering from non-insulin dependant diabetes mellitus.~~

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the erythropoietin protein is epoetin alfa or epoetin beta.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the erythropoietin protein has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the erythropoietin protein has the sequence of human erythropoietin modified by the addition of from 1 to 6 glycosylation sites.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the erythropoietin protein is darbepoetin alfa.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the erythropoietin protein is pegylated.

8. (Amended) The method of claim 7, wherein the erythropoietin protein is a conjugate, said conjugate comprising an erythropoietin protein having at least one free amino group and having the *in vivo* biological activity of causing bone marrow cells to increase production of reticulocytes and red blood cells and selected from the group consisting of human erythropoietin and analogs thereof which have a sequence of human erythropoietin modified by the addition of from 1 to 6 glycosylation sites or a

rearrangement of at least one glycosylation site; said erythropoietin protein being covalently linked to n poly(ethylene glycol) groups of the formula $-CO-(CH_2)_x-(OCH_2CH_2)_m-OR$ with the –CO of each poly(ethylene glycol) group forming an amide bond with one of said amino groups; wherein R is a lower-alkyl; x is 2 or 3; m is from about 450 to about 900; n is from 1 to 3; and n and m are chosen so that the molecular weight of the conjugate minus the erythropoietin protein is from 20 kilodaltons to 100 kilodaltons.

9. (Original)The method of claim 8, wherein x is 3, m is 650 to 750, n is 1 and R is methyl.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the conjugate has the formula

$$P\text{-}[NHCO\text{-}(CH_2)_x\text{-}(OCH_2CH_2)_m\text{-}OR]_n$$

wherein P is the residue of the protein without the free amino group that forms the amide linkage;

R is lower alkyl;

x is 2 or 3;

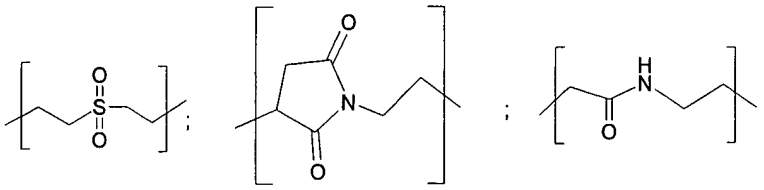
m is from about 450 to about 900;

n is from 1-3; and

wherein m and n are selected such that the molecular weight of the conjugate minus the erythropoietin protein is from about 20 kD to about 100 kD.

11. (Original)The method of claim 7, wherein the erythropoietin protein is a conjugate, said conjugate comprising an erythropoietin protein having at least one free amino group and having the *in vivo* biological activity of causing bone marrow cells to increase production of reticulocytes and red blood cells and selected from the group consisting of human erythropoietin protein and analogs thereof which have the primary structure of human erythropoietin protein modified by the addition of from 1 to 6 glycosylation sites; said erythropoietin protein being covalently linked to from one to three lower-alkoxy poly(ethylene glycol) groups, each poly(ethylene glycol) group being covalently linked to

the erythropoietin protein *via* a linker of the formula –C(O)-X-S-Y- with the C(O) of the linker forming an amide bond with one of said amino groups, X is $-(CH_2)_k-$ or $-CH_2(O-CH_2-CH_2)_k-$, k is from 1 to 10, Y is



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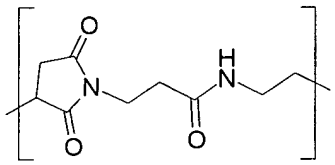
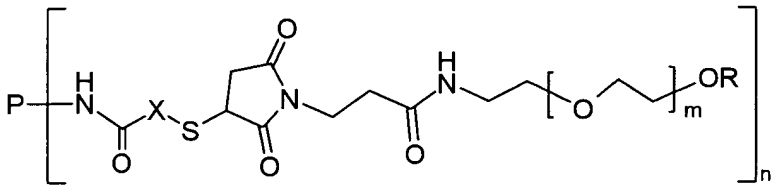


the average molecular weight of each poly(ethylene glycol) moiety is from about 20 kilodaltons to about 40 kilodaltons, and the molecular weight of the conjugate is from about 51 kilodaltons to about 175 kilodaltons.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the erythropoietin conjugate has the formula:



wherein n is an integer from 1 to 3; m is an integer from 450 to 900; R is lower-alkyl; X is $-(CH_2)_k-$ or $-CH_2(O-CH_2-CH_2)_k-$, k is 1 to 10 and P is the residue of the erythropoietin protein without the n amino groups which form an amide linkage with X.

13. (Original) A pharmaceutical composition for the treatment of disturbances in iron distribution comprising from about 25 to about 2,500 μg/ml of erythropoietin, from about 10 to about 200 mmol/l sulfate and having a pH of from about 6.0 to about 7.0.

14. (Original) The pharmaceutical composition of claim 13 comprising from about 50 to about 2,500 μg/ml of erythropoietin, 10 mm sodium phosphate, 40 mM sodium sulfate, 3% mannitol (w/v), 10 mM methionine and 0.01% poloxamer 188 (w/v) and has a pH of about 6.2.

15. (Original) The pharmaceutical composition of claim 13 comprising from about 50 to about 2,500 μg/ml of erythropoietin, 40 mM arginine, 30 mM sodium sulfate, 3% mannitol (w/v), 10 mM methionine, 0.01% poloxamer 188 (w/v) and having a pH of about 6.2.

16. (New) A method of treating disturbances in iron distribution in a patient suffering from diabetes comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of a pharmaceutical composition of human erythropoietin protein, wherein the pharmaceutical composition comprises from about 25 to about 2,500 μg/ml of erythropoietin, from about 10 to about 200 mmol/l sulfate and having a pH of from about 6.0 to about 7.0.

17. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the erythropoietin protein is epoetin alfa or epoetin beta.

18. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the erythropoietin protein has the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.

19. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the erythropoietin protein has the sequence of human erythropoietin modified by the addition of from 1 to 6 glycosylation sites.

20. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the erythropoietin protein is darbepoetin alfa.

21. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the erythropoietin protein is pegylated.

22. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein the erythropoietin protein is a conjugate, said conjugate comprising an erythropoietin protein having at least one free amino group and having the *in vivo* biological activity of causing bone marrow cells to increase production of reticulocytes and red blood cells and selected from the group consisting of human erythropoietin and analogs thereof which have a sequence of human erythropoietin modified by the addition of from 1 to 6 glycosylation sites or a rearrangement of at least one glycosylation site; said erythropoietin protein being covalently linked to n poly(ethylene glycol) groups of the formula $-CO-(CH_2)_x-(OCH_2CH_2)_m-OR$ with the –CO of each poly(ethylene glycol) group forming an amide bond with one of said amino groups; wherein R is a lower-alkyl; x is 2 or 3; m is from about 450 to about 900; n is from 1 to 3; and n and m are chosen so that the molecular weight of the conjugate minus the erythropoietin protein is from 20 kilodaltons to 100 kilodaltons.

23. (New) The method of claim 8, wherein x is 3, m is 650 to 750, n is 1 and R is methyl.

24. (New) The method of claim 8 wherein the conjugate has the formula

$$P\text{-}[NHCO\text{-}(CH_2)_x\text{-}(OCH_2CH_2)_m\text{-}OR]_n$$

wherein P is the residue of the protein without the free amino group that forms the amide linkage;

R is lower alkyl;

x is 2 or 3;

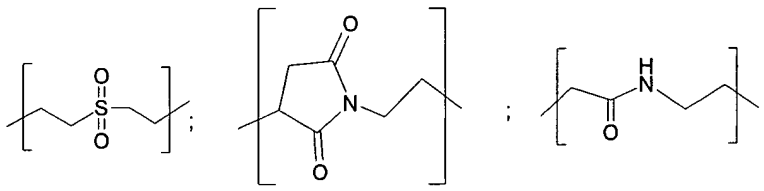
m is from about 450 to about 900;

n is from 1-3; and

wherein m and n are selected such that the molecular weight of the conjugate minus the erythropoietin protein is from about 20 kD to about 100 kD.

25. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein the erythropoietin protein is a conjugate, said conjugate comprising an erythropoietin protein having at least one free amino group and having the *in vivo* biological activity of causing bone marrow cells to increase

production of reticulocytes and red blood cells and selected from the group consisting of human erythropoietin protein and analogs thereof which have the primary structure of human erythropoietin protein modified by the addition of from 1 to 6 glycosylation sites; said erythropoietin protein being covalently linked to from one to three lower-alkoxy poly(ethylene glycol) groups, each poly(ethylene glycol) group being covalently linked to the erythropoietin protein *via* a linker of the formula –C(O)-X-S-Y- with the C(O) of the linker forming an amide bond with one of said amino groups, X is $-(CH_2)_k-$ or $-CH_2(O-CH_2-CH_2)_k-$, k is from 1 to 10, Y is



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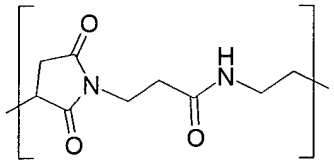
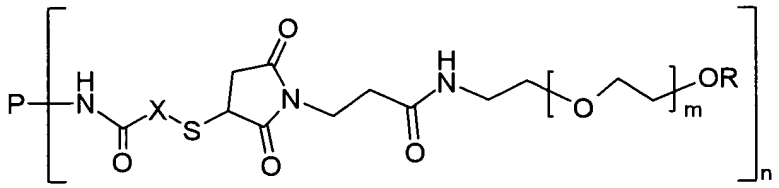


the average molecular weight of each poly(ethylene glycol) moiety is from about 20 kilodaltons to about 40 kilodaltons, and the molecular weight of the conjugate is from about 51 kilodaltons to about 175 kilodaltons.

26. (New) The method of claim 11, wherein the erythropoietin conjugate has the formula:



wherein n is an integer from 1 to 3; m is an integer from 450 to 900; R is lower-alkyl; X is $-(CH_2)_k-$ or $-CH_2(O-CH_2-CH_2)_k-$, k is 1 to 10 and P is the residue of the erythropoietin protein without the n amino groups which form an amide linkage with X.